



TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 1886.

WE have frequently placed before our readers much interesting information concerning one of the most important and successful evangelistic efforts of our time, the McAll Mission in France. As will be seen from an advertisement appearing in another column a public meeting in the interests of this Mission will be held in Knox Church lecture room on Thursday evening next. The speakers expected are Rev. H. M. Parsons, Rev. G. M. Milligan, Rev. Hugh Johnston and the Hon. S. H. Blake.

ON another page will be found a modest and straightforward appeal, on behalf of mission work in Muskoka, by the Rev. Allan Findlay, Superintendent of Missions in Muskoka and Parry Sound. These picturesque regions may not have the brilliant future predicted for the North-West, but they have a future nevertheless. They will afford in time comfortable homes for industrious and energetic communities, and even now encouraging progress is visible. What these hardy pioneers in our northern districts have already done, and are now doing, to secure the permanent enjoyment of Gospel ordinances gives them a strong claim on the sympathy and encouragement of their brethren in more favourable circumstances. The modes of help suggested in Mr. Findlay's letter are within easy reach, and we are sure will in many instances be gladly adopted.

"KNOXONIAN" ends his observations on the Augmentation Fund this week. We would like to add a remark on a point that our contributor did not touch. If the Scheme fails it will fail simply and solely because the great body of the people did not take hold of it. The cities have done fairly well. Some of the city congregations have given handsome sums. Some of the town congregations have also done well. The fact, however, remains that many congregations in the rural districts have not done anything like as much for this fund as they do for some of the other funds. Even those that give liberally to other funds don't seem to give for Augmentation as freely as one would expect. Does the blame lie entirely with the people? Are not pastors and missionary deputations a little to blame in not presenting the claims of this Scheme and those of the Aged and Infirm Ministers' Fund as vigorously as they should do. Missionary meetings are now being held in all parts of the Church. Most earnestly do we urge upon those who address these meetings to lay the claims of these two funds before the people. We desire to emphasize one point made by "Knoxonian." The pastoral relation lies at the very basis of church prosperity. That which strengthens the pastorate helps every other Scheme. That which weakens the pastorate weakens every other. Nothing short of downright immorality weakens the pastorate more or faster than a half-starved ministry. In the name of all that Presbyterians hold dear we ask our readers, once for all, to give the Augmentation Scheme a genuine lift during the next four months.

WHATEVER becomes of the negotiations with the Methodist Church in regard to mission stations, something more practical, if less sentimental, might perhaps be done within our own body. It goes without saying that a considerable number of our stations might be consolidated. That is to say, they might be if the people would consent. Stations are in some cases nearer than they need be, and a re-arrangement would save labour and money. It is also a fact that we have in several places two congregations where one would meet all purposes. That is to say, one would do if the people would unite, but then they won't. And the people are everything in such matters. There is no station apart from the people who worship in it. We don't want congregations and stations without people. There have been such concerns, but they are not a success. A little gentle pressure, however, might consolidate some of our fields, and where this can be done it ought to be done. There is no sort of sense in trying to make our people join the Methodists if we cannot induce them to join each

other. There has been a good deal written lately in this country about union between Episcopalians, Methodists, Baptists, Congregationalists and Presbyterians. We don't care to say just what we think about such discussions, and the evident attempts made by some to exhibit themselves on a union wave. Enough for us to know that few of our Presbyteries can unite two struggling congregations when everybody knows one would be better than two; that it is hard work to unite even two mission stations; and that a committee of the wisest men in the Church cannot consolidate six colleges and make them three. The other bodies cannot form unions within themselves of their own people any easier than we can. And yet there are men who write and speak—gravely, we suppose,—about uniting all the Protestant bodies in the country!

THE Hon. G. W. Ross is reported to have made the following sensible and timely remarks at the opening of a Collegiate Institute the other day:

Every teacher should himself be a model of physical vigor and he should be able to produce in a scholar a like result. He thought that many children were sent to school at too tender an age. The law laid down the age at which a child should begin his schooling at five years; but he thought it would not be much out of the way if parents should trespass on the law in this respect, and the child be allowed to chase butterflies and pluck dandelions for another year. Every child should be launched into the world of business with a vigorous body, even if it was done at the expense of his education. The importance of this could be fittingly illustrated by the example of the present Prime Minister, the Hon. Sir John A. Macdonald, who, now in his seventy-second year, was as hale and strong in body and mind, as when he first knew him, fifteen years ago. The case of Mr. Gladstone, who had been rightly characterized as the "Grand Old Man," was another instance of this.

Instead of being launched into the world of business with a vigorous body, too many are carried in on a stretcher. They begin life as semi-invalids. Their digestion is impaired and their nerves shaky at the start in life. Beginning enfeebled, they suffer more or less all the way through, and are often beaten by men who are inferior in every respect except health. Not one child in a hundred ought to be sent to school at five years of age. Parents should break the law whenever they think proper. Delicate children should not be compelled to take all the examinations simply because they are laid down on the school programme. Health is a more valuable thing for a boy than a knowledge of surds. It is more important for him that his own anatomy should work well than that he should know all about the human body. The clerical profession suffers more than any other from school and college abuses. How many ministers are there in our own Church who would willingly exchange all the Hebrew and metaphysics they know for steady nerves or good digestive organs?

AS most of our readers are aware a joint committee of the Presbyterian and Methodist Churches has been in session at Ottawa for the purpose of devising a plan by which these two Churches can keep out of each other's way in all localities in which there is not room for both. Whatever action is taken—if any be taken by the supreme courts of these bodies—will, we presume, refer exclusively to future operations. It would never do to hand over a body of people to whom we have been preaching the Gospel as we understand it, and who are members of our Church, to another Church. These people have feelings and rights which must be respected. And then, too, it must be remembered that if we did arrange for a union we might not be able to deliver up the station. The people might not go. Most assuredly they would not go. Presbyterian people cannot be driven. The very most that can be done is to have an understanding about the places in which the Churches will begin operations. This, if practicable, may be a good thing. If in some very small place there is a considerable body of Methodists and very few Presbyterians, it is held that the Presbyterians should keep out, the Methodists pursuing the same course where the numbers are reversed. The scheme looks well enough on paper, but may be utterly unworkable in practice. A small place may, in this country, soon become a large place. Brantford and Stratford and Guelph and St. Thomas were small places a few years ago, but they are cities to-day. The large Presbyterian congregations in each of them were once very small bodies of people. Some man with union on the brain might have proposed to hand them all over to the Methodists. How many congregations have we that were

not once a mere handful of people? How many have we that were not once mission stations? We are not opposing the scheme. There is nothing so far to help or oppose. It is one of those schemes that can be put on paper in a very attractive form, garnished with nice phrases about union, brotherly love, etc. In practice it may be altogether different. The Presbyterians and the Congregationalists have a somewhat similar scheme in the Western States, and they have more friction in one year than we have had with the Methodists in the last ten. If any good can be done by this committee, by all means let it be done.

A CIRCULAR-LETTER.

THE venerable Roman Catholic Archbishop of Toronto has felt impelled to issue a circular-letter to "Our Protestant Friends." With a single exception no good Protestant will be disposed to find fault with the tone of his Grace's letter. Dignitaries of the Roman Catholic Church are so accustomed to speak in an authoritative manner to their own people that it has become habitual to them on all occasions. It is, however, ludicrous to address Protestants in such fashion. They decline to recognize lordship over God's heritage, and they remember that the Founder of the Christian Church—a greater authority than either Pope or Emperor—has said: "But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ." If Archbishop or other dignitary chooses to address Protestants on religious or moral questions he is at perfect liberty to do so, but only in the spirit and manner of Paul, who says: "I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say." It is the invariable practice of Romish authorities to assume that they are absolutely and infallibly right, and that all who decline to see as they see are completely in the wrong. There is a wholesome prejudice against the assumption of authority.

It is very true that in political warfare Conservative and Liberal say uncomplimentary things of each other, and it is quite probable that a stranger, unacquainted with the political history of Canada, who reads only the utterances of one party might conclude that the opposite was thoroughly corrupt and imbecile. The remedy suggested for this is the right one: the opinions and reasonings of both classes of politicians ought to be fairly weighed, the true adopted and the false rejected. Now the intelligent Protestant at once concedes the exercise of free inquiry and impartial judgment. If it be right for him to inquire and investigate for himself, the same right belongs to his Roman Catholic fellow-citizen; but do Roman Catholic bishops and priests commend the study of Protestant theology and literature to their congregations, so that they may obtain by impartial inquiry a sure conviction of divine truth? The duty the Archbishop calls his Protestant friends to perform—one would think—ought to be equally binding on his own people.

Bowing and other reverential recognition of images and pictures the author of the circular-letter does not hold to be idolatrous, because in the British House of Lords the ancient custom of bowing to the empty throne is continued. He asks: Is this idolatry? Not necessarily; but like many other antiquated customs it is, in these days, a meaningless ceremony. A child may, innocently enough, kiss a photograph of its dear parents, but when a Catholic pays the same reverence to a picture of Christ, he has not the assurance the child has that the picture is a correct one. The most gifted and devout artist has only been able imperfectly to reproduce his own ideal of the form of the Saviour of Men. No artistic representation can convey an adequate idea of Him who is the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of His person. The practice of the pious Catholic may appear reverential, but it looks wonderfully like idolatry nevertheless.

Differences of religious opinion among Protestants are usually cited as an argument favourable to the Papacy. Ever since Bossuet's time the variations of Protestantism have been thought by Romish polemics to be fatal to its claims. The religion professed by Protestants is spoken of in the New Testament as "the unity of the faith." Toward that higher unity the different sections of the Protestant Church are steadily tending, and Christ's prayer will be fulfilled: